

REMARKS

Claims 117, 119-127, 129-130, 132-134, 137-147, 149-151 and 154-196 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 117 is amended and claims 118 is canceled.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that the Office Action indicates that claims 189-196 are allowed.

Reconsideration based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 145, 178 and 179-188 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Sauer (U.S. Patent No. 5,624,428), and claims 117-127, 129, 130, 133, 134, 137-144, 146, 147, 149-151 and 155-177 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Sauer. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Regarding independent claims 117, 129, 146, 163, 168, 173 and 179, Sauer does not disclose or even suggest an absorbent article in which, *inter alia*, first and second lateral ends of the front and back waist portions are prefolded.

Instead, as shown in FIG. 2 of Sauer, for example, the lateral ends of the front and back waist portions of the diaper of Sauer are left unfolded, with fastening means 36, 38 disposed between the lateral ends of the front and back waist portions. Further, the Examiner has not addressed this claimed feature in the Office Action.

Regarding independent claims 145 and 178, Sauer does not disclose or even suggest an absorbent article including, inter alia, a third prefolded nonwoven connector and a fourth nonwoven connector, where the first prefolded nonwoven connector is releasably

preengaged with the third prefolded nonwoven connector and the second prefolded nonwoven connector is releasably preengaged with the fourth prefolded nonwoven connector.

The Office Action asserts that the primary fasteners 42 and secondary fasteners 44 of Sauer correspond with the claimed third and fourth prefolded nonwoven connectors. However, the primary and secondary fasteners of Sauer are not prefolded, and further, the Office Action is inconsistent in referring to elements 36 and 38 of Sauer as “nonwoven connectors”, and then in the same rejection, also referring to the primary and secondary fasteners of Sauer as “nonwoven connectors”.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 117, 129, 145, 146, 163, 168, 173, 178 and 179 are in condition for allowance. The dependent claims are also in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed as well as for the additional features they recite.

Withdrawal of all pending rejections and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

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If any fee is deemed necessary to preserve the pendency of the subject application,
authorization is hereby given to charge any such fee to Deposit Account No. 01-1785.

Respectfully submitted

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